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ART. IX. — *Ninth Annual Report of the Trustees of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, to the Corporation.* Boston : John H. Eastburn. 8vo. pp. 48.

THIS imperial mind of ours, as it sits enclosed from view, within the folds of its fleshly tabernacle, has, by the grant of benevolent nature, three principal channels of communication with the world outside. Debarred from their use, it is lonely, receiving nothing, bestowing nothing, except so far as benevolent art can provide some substitute. By speech chiefly, it sends out ideas ; by sight and hearing chiefly, it takes them in. Speech, except in the rare case of some organic deformity of its own apparatus, is only wanting when defect in the organ of hearing forbids that imitation of heard sounds, by which speech is learned. The deaf-mute is mute, because, by reason of his deafness, he is unacquainted with the articulations, which, could he hear them, he, like others, would copy and adopt. Art comes to his aid. It cannot give him either use of spoken language, its use in imparting or in receiving thought and sentiment. But it has found out ways to give him the use of written language, which, to a very great extent, may be made a substitute for spoken, besides having its own large department of unspeakable utility, for those by whom the latter is enjoyed. Art does this by laying the task of the closed ear on the ready and obedient eye. Audible language, on either part, being forbidden by the sad conditions of the case, a visible language is taught ; first, an easy, but vague and limited language of visible natural signs ; next, the more copious and exact language of visible arbitrary signs, or letters arranged in words and sentences, and exhibited on a written or printed page, or in postures of the hand. Possessed of the elements of this latter language, the deaf-mute is introduced to the same wide world of knowledge and communication, as other men. He can learn and can teach, can be addressed, and can express. Under the impulse of a gladly awakened curiosity, the burdened sight does cheerfully its double labor. The great chasm thus bridged, the medium of communication thus established, patience and diligence may accomplish the rest. The mind has emerged from its dark chamber, equipped for wide excursions. He,

on whom Nature seemed to have set a black seal of incapacity and desolation, is an intelligent and happy member of the social state.

Here, in the labors of L'Épée, Sicard, and their excellent followers in this country, was one beautiful triumph of art employed in the service of humanity. A second, like to it, has been not less laudably achieved. For another class, apparently doomed by a hard fate to helplessness and sorrow, wisdom was at the other entrance quite shut out. The condition of the blind, destitute of friendly aid except for mere support and safety, can by no means be maintained to be so pitiable as that of the deaf, obtaining freely, as the former do, in childhood, the use of spoken language ; still, to compensate to them as far as possible their grievous loss of the power of looking on the works of God and man, on the face of nature and of their friends, — to give them the resources of exhilarating and profitable amusement and industry, — to enable them to impart and receive pleasure and instruction, by reading and writing what they cannot see, — is a most worthy task for science and philanthropy. In their instruction, the process is the opposite of the last ; the hearing, in alliance with the touch, is made to do the work of the unavailing eye.

But what, if sight and hearing both fail ? Where may the lever then be placed, which shall move, with the slightest impulse, the waiting world within ? There stands a human body, and encased in it, you suppose, are a human mind and heart. But were it in its shroud and coffin, could it be more utterly unapproachable, as to any communication or sympathy ? You speak, but the anomalous being before you cannot hear ; you listen, but it cannot speak. The broad light rests on the vast revelations around it ; but it is encompassed by “ever-during dark.” How address it with any sign, any appeal, any inquiry, any consolation ? Feed it, and it will swallow. Touch it, and it will know — what ? Will it know so much as that it is touched, in any sense in which we, seeing, hearing, thinking men, understand the words ? How mysterious, how dread, how *remote* such a presence. What is that awfully independent mind doing in its inaccessible cave ? What is more to the purpose, — has art any resources to perforate its prison walls, and mercifully to convey it some tidings of humanity, and some alleviations for the woful dreariness of its solitude ?

The deplorable case of blindness and deafness combined, has in very few instances come under the notice of qualified observers. Only one is known to be on record in England, before that of James Mitchell, described, in 1812, by Dugald Stewart.\* Attention has been recently attracted to another, in France; and that of Julia Brace, at the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Hartford, Connecticut, is known to some of our readers. Dr. Howe, the Superintendent of the Perkins Asylum, is, however, of opinion, that they are much less infrequent than has been supposed; four in New England, besides that at Hartford, having come within his own observation. One of these has been for over three years under his treatment, and his admirably patient and judicious care has been rewarded by results so extraordinary, that, as a mere matter of curiosity, seldom is any thing so attractive offered to the public attention. Apart from its claims on the psychologist, and the practical friend of humanity, the story, as related in the Appendix to the last “Annual Report of the Institution for the Blind,” has an interest for the general reader, beyond comparison greater than those famous adventures of Caspar Hauser, which were of late such a blessing to the circulating libraries.

Laura Bridgman, born in Hanover, New Hampshire, in December, 1829, was a pretty and sprightly infant, but of feeble constitution, and subject to severe fits, till she was a year and a half old. For six months from that time, her health materially improved, and in this interval, according to the account now given by her family, her infantile capacities were rapidly developed. At two years of age,

“Suddenly she sickened again; her disease raged with great violence during five weeks, when her eyes and ears were inflamed, suppurated, and their contents were discharged. But though sight and hearing were gone for ever, the poor child’s sufferings were not ended; the fever raged during seven weeks; ‘for five months she was kept in bed in a darkened room; it was a year before she could walk unsupported, and two years before she could sit up all day.’ It was now observ-

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\* See “*Some Account of a Boy born Blind and Deaf*,” &c. in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, Vol. VII., Part I. Of this case the Edinburgh Reviewers said (Vol. XX. p. 468); “No account of any being, doomed from birth to a privation, so nearly complete, both of sight and hearing, has hitherto been discovered in the records of science.”

ed that her sense of smell was almost entirely destroyed ; and consequently, that her taste was much blunted.

“ It was not until four years of age, that the poor child’s bodily health seemed restored, and she was able to enter upon her apprenticeship of life and the world.” — p. 25.

Thus the case was made about as unmanageable as it is possible to conceive. With sight and hearing gone, whatever approach can be made to the disabled mind must be through the avenues of smell, taste, and feeling. But smell, which at best is the medium of a very small number of ideas, was almost lost ; and taste, which conveys still fewer, was much impaired. Whatever was to be effected was to be done through the one sense of feeling. By this one slight thread passing to her from the intelligible universe, the unhappy child was to be brought, if at all, to the knowledge of nature, of truth, of duty, of God.

The account of her progress till her eighth year, as being obtained at second hand, is brief and general.

“ As soon as she could walk, she began to explore the room, and then the house ; she became familiar with the form, density, weight, and heat, of every article she could lay her hands upon. She followed her mother, and felt of her hands and arms, as she was occupied about the house ; and her disposition to imitate led her to repeat every thing herself. She even learned to sew a little, and to knit.

“ Her affections, too, began to expand, and seemed to be lavished upon the members of her family with peculiar force.

“ But the means of communication with her were very limited ; she could only be told to go to a place by being pushed ; or to come to one by a sign of drawing her. Patting her gently on the head signified approbation ; on the back, disapprobation.

“ She showed every disposition to learn, and manifestly began to use a natural language of her own ; she had a sign to express her idea of each member of the family ; as drawing her fingers down each side of her face, to allude to the whiskers of one ; twirling her hand around, in imitation of the motion of the spinning wheel, for another ; and so on. But although she received all the aid that a kind mother could bestow, she soon began to give proof of the importance of language to the developement of human character : caressing and chiding will do for infants and dogs, but not for children ; and by the time Laura was seven years old, the moral effects of her privation began to appear. There was nothing to control her will but the absolute power of another, and humanity revolts at this ; she had already begun to disregard all but the sterner nature of her father ; and it was evident, that as the propensi-

ties should increase with her physical growth, so would the difficulty of restraining them increase.

“At this time, I was so fortunate as to hear of the child, and immediately hastened to Hanover, to see her. I found her with a well-formed figure ; a strongly-marked, nervous-sanguine temperament ; a large and beautifully shaped head, and the whole system in healthy action.” — pp. 24, 25.

In October, 1837, she was brought to the Institution for the Blind in Boston.

“For a while, she was much bewildered ; and after waiting about two weeks, until she became acquainted with her new locality, and somewhat familiar with the inmates, the attempt was made to give her knowledge of arbitrary signs, by which she could interchange thoughts with others.

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“The first experiments were made by taking articles in common use, such as knives, forks, spoons, keys, &c., and pasting upon them labels with their names printed in raised letters. These she felt of very carefully, and soon, of course, distinguished that the crooked lines *spoon*, differed as much from the crooked lines *key*, as the spoon differed from the key in form.

“Then small detached labels, with the same words printed upon them, were put into her hands ; and she soon observed that they were similar to the ones pasted on the articles. She showed her perception of this similarity by laying the label *key* upon the key, and the label *spoon* upon the spoon. She was encouraged here by the natural sign of approbation, patting on the head.

“The same process was then repeated with all the articles which she could handle ; and she very easily learned to place the proper labels upon them. It was evident, however, that the only intellectual exercise was that of imitation and memory. She recollected that the label *book* was placed upon a book, and she repeated the process first from imitation, next from memory, with the only motive the love of approbation, but apparently without the intellectual perception of any relation between the things.

“After a while, instead of labels, the individual letters were given to her on detached bits of paper ; they were arranged side by side, so as to spell *book*, *key*, &c. ; then they were mixed up in a heap, and a sign was made for her to arrange them herself, so as to express the words *book*, *key*, &c., and she did so.

“Hitherto, the process had been mechanical, and the success about as great as teaching a very knowing dog, a variety

of tricks. The poor child had sat in mute amazement, and patiently imitated every thing her teacher did ; but now the truth began to flash upon her, — her intellect began to work, — she perceived that here was a way by which she could herself make up a sign of any thing that was in her own mind, and show it to another mind, and at once her countenance lighted up with a human expression ; it was no longer a dog, or parrot, — it was an immortal spirit, eagerly seizing upon a new link of union with other spirits ! I could almost fix upon the moment when this truth dawned upon her mind, and spread its light to her countenance ; I saw that the great obstacle was overcome, and that henceforward nothing but patient and persevering, but plain and straightforward efforts were to be used.

“ The result thus far is quickly related, and easily conceived ; but not so was the process ; for many weeks of apparently unprofitable labor were passed, before it was effected.

“ When it was said above, that a sign was made, it was intended to say, that the action was performed by her teacher, she feeling of his hands, and then imitating the motion.

“ The next step was to procure a set of metal types, with the different letters of the alphabet cast upon their ends ; also a board, in which were square holes, into which holes she could set the types, so that the letters on their ends could alone be felt above the surface.

“ Then, on any article being handed to her, for instance, a pencil, or a watch, she would select the component letters, and arrange them on her board, and read them with apparent pleasure.

“ She was exercised for several weeks in this way, until her vocabulary became extensive ; and then the important step was taken of teaching her how to represent the different letters by the position of her fingers, instead of the cumbrous apparatus of the board and types. She accomplished this speedily, and easily, for her intellect had begun to work in aid of her teacher, and her progress was rapid.

“ This was the period, about three months after she had commenced, that the first report of her case was made, in which it is stated that ‘ she has just learned the manual alphabet, as used by the deaf mutes, and it is a subject of delight and wonder to see how rapidly, correctly, and eagerly, she goes on with her labors. Her teacher gives her a new object, for instance a pencil, first lets her examine it, and get an idea of its use, then teaches her how to spell it by making the signs for the letters with her own fingers ; the child grasps her hand, and feels of her fingers, as the different letters are formed, — she turns her head a little one side, like a person listening closely, — her lips are apart, — she seems scarcely to breathe

— and her countenance, at first anxious, gradually changes to a smile, as she comprehends the lesson. She then holds up her tiny fingers, and spells the word in the manual alphabet ; next she takes her types and arranges her letters ; and last, to, make sure that she is right, takes the whole of the types composing the word, and places them upon or in contact with the pencil, or whatever the object may be.’

“The whole of the succeeding year was passed in gratifying her eager inquiries for the names of every object which she could possibly handle ; in exercising her in the use of the manual alphabet ; in extending in every possible way her knowledge of the physical relations of things ; and in proper care of her health.” — pp. 25 – 27.

The following is an extract from the Report on her case, made at this period ;

“She never seems to repine, but has all the buoyancy and gayety of childhood. She is fond of fun and frolic, and when playing with the rest of the children, her shrill laugh sounds loudest of the group.

“When left alone, she seems very happy if she has her knitting or sewing, and will busy herself for hours ; if she has no occupation, she evidently amuses herself by imaginary dialogues, or by recalling past impressions ; she counts with her fingers, or spells out names of things which she has recently learned, in the manual alphabet of the deaf-mutes. In this lonely self-communion she seems to reason, reflect, and argue ; if she spells a word wrong with the fingers of her right hand, she instantly strikes it with her left, as her teacher does, in sign of disapprobation ; if right, then she pats herself upon the head, and looks pleased. She sometimes purposely spells a word wrong with the left hand, looks roguish for a moment and laughs, and then with the right hand strikes the left, as if to correct it.

“During the year she has attained great dexterity in the use of the manual alphabet of the deaf-mutes ; and she spells out the words and sentences which she knows, so fast and deftly, that only those accustomed to this language can follow with the eye the rapid motions of her fingers.

“But wonderful as is the rapidity with which she writes her thoughts upon the air, still more so is the ease and accuracy with which she reads the words thus written by another, grasping their hands in hers, and following every movement of their fingers, as letter after letter conveys their meaning to her mind. It is in this way that she converses with her blind playmates ; and nothing can more forcibly show the power of mind in forcing matter to its purpose, than a meeting between them.



For, if great talent and skill are necessary for two pantomimes to paint their thoughts and feelings by the movements of the body and the expression of the countenance, how much greater the difficulty when darkness shrouds them both, and the one can hear no sound !

“ When Laura is walking through a passage way with her hands spread before her, she knows instantly every one she meets, and passes them with a sign of recognition ; but if it be a girl of her own age, and especially if one of her favorites, there is instantly a bright smile of recognition,— and a twining of arms,—a grasping of hands,—and a swift telegraphing upon the tiny fingers, whose rapid evolutions convey the thoughts and feelings from the outposts of one mind to those of the other. There are questions and answers, — exchanges of joy, or sorrow, — there are kissings and partings, — just as between little children with all their senses.” — pp. 27, 28.

She had been six months at the institution, when her mother came to visit her.

“ The mother stood some time, gazing with overflowing eyes upon her unfortunate child, who, all unconscious of her presence, was playing about the room. Presently Laura ran against her, and at once began feeling of her hands, examining her dress, and trying to find out if she knew her ; but not succeeding in this, she turned away as from a stranger, and the poor woman could not conceal the pang she felt, at finding that her beloved child did not know her.

“ She then gave Laura a string of beads, which she used to wear at home, which were recognised by the child at once, who, with much joy, put them around her neck, and sought me eagerly, to say she understood the string was from her home.

“ The mother now tried to caress her, but poor Laura repelled her, preferring to be with her acquaintances.

“ Another article from home was now given her, and she began to look much interested ; she examined the stranger much closer, and gave me to understand she knew she came from Hanover ; she even endured her caresses, but would leave her with indifference at the slightest signal. The distress of the mother was now painful to behold ; for, although she had feared that she should not be recognised, the painful reality of being treated with cold indifference by a darling child, was too much for woman’s nature to bear.

“ After a while, on the mother taking hold of her again, a vague idea seemed to flit across Laura’s mind, that this could not be a stranger ; she therefore felt of her hands very eagerly, while her countenance assumed an expression of intense

interest, — she became very pale, and then suddenly red, — hope seemed struggling with doubt and anxiety, and never were contending emotions more strongly painted upon the human face ; at this moment of painful uncertainty, the mother drew her close to her side, and kissed her fondly, when at once the truth flashed upon the child, and all mistrust and anxiety disappeared from her face, as with an expression of exceeding joy she eagerly nestled to the bosom of her parent, and yielded herself to her fond embraces.

“After this, the beads were all unheeded ; the playthings which were offered to her were utterly disregarded ; her playmates, for whom but a moment before she gladly left the stranger, now vainly strove to pull her from her mother ; and though she yielded her usual instantaneous obedience to my signal to follow me, it was evidently with painful reluctance. She clung close to me, as if bewildered and fearful ; and when, after a moment, I took her to her mother, she sprang to her arms, and clung to her with eager joy.” — pp. 28, 29.

The parting scene evinced alike her tenderness, intelligence, and resolution.

“Laura accompanied her mother to the door, clinging close to her all the way, until they arrived at the threshold, where she paused, and felt around, to ascertain who was near her. Perceiving the matron, of whom she is very fond, she grasped her with one hand, holding on convulsively to her mother with the other, and thus she stood for a moment, — then she dropped her mother’s hand, — put her handkerchief to her eyes, and turning round, clung sobbing to the matron, while her mother departed, with emotions as deep as those of her child.” — p. 29.

At the end of the year 1839, when she had been a little more than two years at the Institution, her proficiency was thus described ;

“Having mastered the manual alphabet of the deaf-mutes, and learned to spell readily the names of every thing within her reach, she was then taught words expressive of positive qualities, as, *hardness*, *softness* ; and she readily learned to express the quality, by connecting the adjectives *hard* or *soft* with the substantive ; though she generally followed what one would suppose to be the natural order in the succession of ideas, by placing the substantive first.

“It was found too difficult, however, then to make her understand any general expression of quality, as *hardness*,

*softness*, in the abstract. Indeed, this is a process of mind most difficult of performance to any, especially to deaf-mutes.

"Next she was taught those expressions of relation to place, which she could understand. For instance, a ring was taken and placed *on* a box, then the words were spelt to her, and she repeated them from imitation. Then the ring was placed *on* a hat, and a sign given her to spell ; she spelt, *ring on box*, — but being checked, and the right words given, she immediately began to exercise her judgment, and, as usual, seemed intently thinking. Then the same was repeated with a bag, a desk, and a great many other things, until at last she learned that she must name the thing *on* which the article was.

"Then the same article was put *into* the box, and the words "ring *in* box " given to her. This puzzled her for many minutes, and she made many mistakes ; for instance, after she had learned to say correctly whether the ring was *on* or *in* a box, a drawer, a hat, a bucket, &c., if she were asked, "where is house, or matron," she would say, "*in* box." Cross-questioning, however, is seldom necessary to ascertain whether she really understands the force of the words she is learning ; for when the true meaning dawns upon her mind, the light spreads to her countenance.

"In this case, the perception seemed instantaneous, and the natural sign by which she expressed it was peculiar and striking ; she spelt *on*, then laid her hand *on* the other ; then she spelt *into*, and enclosed one hand *within* the other.

"She easily acquired a knowledge and use of active verbs, especially those expressive of *tangible action* ; as to *walk*, to *run*, to *sew*, to *shake*.

"At first, of course, no distinction could be made of mood and tense ; she used the words in a general sense, and according to the order of her *sense of ideas*. Thus, in asking some one to give her bread, she would first use the word expressive of the leading idea, and say, *Bread, give, Laura*. If she wanted water, she would say, *Water, drink, Laura*.

"Soon, however, she learned the use of the auxiliary verbs, of the difference of past, present, and future tense. For instance, here is an early sentence ; *Keller is sick, — when will Keller well* ; the use of *be* she had not acquired.

"Having acquired the use of substantives, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, it was thought time to make the experiment of trying to teach her to *write*, and to show her that she might communicate her ideas to persons not in contact with her.

"It was amusing to witness the mute amazement with which she submitted to the process, the docility with which she imi-

tated every motion, and the perseverance with which she moved her pencil over and over again in the same track, until she could form the letter. But when at last the idea dawned upon her, that by this mysterious process she could make other people understand what she thought, her joy was boundless.

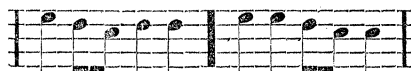
“Never did a child apply more eagerly and joyfully to any task, than she did to this ; and in a few months she could make every letter distinctly, and separate words from each other ; and she actually wrote, unaided, a legible letter to her mother, in which she expressed the idea of her being well, and of her expectation of going home in a few weeks. It was indeed a very rude and imperfect letter, couched in the language which a prattling infant would use. Still it shadowed forth, and expressed to her mother, the ideas that were passing in her own mind.

“She is familiar with the processes of addition and subtraction in small numbers. Subtraction of one number from another puzzled her for a time ; but by help of objects she accomplished it. She can count and conceive objects to about one hundred in number ; to express an indefinitely great number, or more than she can count, she says, *hundred*. If she thought a friend was to be absent many years, she would say, *will come hundred Sundays*, — meaning weeks. She is pretty accurate in measuring time, and seems to have an intuitive tendency to do it. Unaided by the changes of night and day, by the light, or the sound of any timepiece, she nevertheless divides time pretty accurately.

“With the days of the week, and the week itself as a whole, she is perfectly familiar. For instance ; if asked what day will it be in fifteen days more, she readily names the day of the week. The day she divides by the commencement and end of school, by the recesses, and by the arrival of meal-times.

“Those persons who hold that the capacity of perceiving and measuring the lapse of time is an innate and distinct faculty of the mind, may deem it an important fact, that Laura evidently can measure time so accurately, as to distinguish between a half and whole note of music.

“Seated at the piano forte, she will strike the notes in a measure like the following, quite correctly.



“Now it will be perceived, that she must have clear perception of lapse of time, in order to strike the two eighths at

the right instant ; for in the first measure they occur at the second beat, in the second measure at the third beat.

“ Her judgment of distances and of relations of place is very accurate. She will rise from her seat, go straight towards a door, put out her hand just at the right time, and grasp the handle with precision.” — pp. 29 – 31.

The first prodigious difficulties thus happily overcome, her progress during the last year, which completed the eleventh year of her age, was, of course, more rapid. We reluctantly omit a few of the details in Dr. Howe’s recent statement. We should do it too much wrong by any attempt to abridge it further.

“ Her health has been very good. She has not grown much in height, but her frame has filled out.

“ A perceptible change has taken place in the size and shape of her head ; and though unfortunately the measurement taken two years ago has been mislaid, every one who has been well acquainted with her, notices a marked increase in the size of the forehead. She is now just eleven years old ; and her height is four feet, four inches, and seven tenths. Her head measures twenty inches and eight tenths in circumference, in a line drawn around it, and passing over the prominences of the parietal, and those of the frontal bones ; above this line the head rises one inch and one tenth, and is broad and full. The measurement is four inches from one orifice of the ear to the other ; and from the occipital spine to the root of the nose, it is seven inches.

“ Nothing has occurred to indicate the slightest perception of light or sound, or any hope of it ; and although some of those who are much with her, suppose that her smell is more acute than it was, even this seems very doubtful.

“ It is true that she sometimes applies things to her nose, but often it is merely in imitation of the blind children about her ; and it is unaccompanied by that peculiar lighting up of the countenance, which is observable whenever she discovers any new quality in an object.

“ It was stated in the first report, that she could perceive very pungent odors, such as that of cologne ; but it seemed to be as much by the irritation they produced upon the nervous membrane of the nares, as by any impression upon the olfactory nerve.

“ It is clear that the sensation cannot be pleasurable, nor even a source of information to her respecting physical qualities ; for such is her eagerness to gain this information, that could smell serve her, she would exercise it incessantly.

“Those who have seen Julia Brace, or any other deaf-blind person, could hardly fail to observe how quickly they apply every thing which they feel, to the nose ; and how by this incessant exercise, the smell becomes almost incredibly acute. Now with Laura this is not the case ; she seldom puts a new thing to her nose ; and when she does, it is mechanically, as it were, and without any interest.

“Her sense of touch has evidently improved in acuteness ; for she now distinguishes more accurately the different undulations of the air, or the vibrations of the floor, than she did last year. She perceives very readily when a door is opened or shut, though she may be sitting at the opposite side of the room. She perceives also the tread of persons upon the floor.

“Her mental perceptions, resulting from sensation, are much more rapid than they were, for she now perceives by the slightest touch, qualities and conditions of things, similar to those she had formerly to feel long and carefully for. So with persons, she recognises her acquaintances in an instant, by touching their hands or their dress ; and there are probably fifty individuals, who if they should stand in a row, and hold out each a hand to her, would be recognised by that alone.”

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“The progress which she has made in intellectual acquirements, can be fully appreciated by those only who have seen her frequently. The improvement, however, is made evident by her greater command of language ; and by the conception which she now has of the force of parts of speech, which last year she did not use in her simple sentences ; for instance, of pronouns, which she has begun to use within six months. Last spring, returning fatigued from her journey home, she complained of a pain in her side, and on being asked what caused it, she used these words, *Laura did go to see mother, ride did make Laura side ache, horse was wrong, did not run softly.* If she were now to express the same thing she would say, *I did go to see mother, ride did make my side ache.* This will be seen by an extract from one of her teachers' diary of last month, 'Dec. 18th. To-day Laura asked me 'what is voice ?' I told her as well as I could, that it was an impression made upon another when people talk with their mouth. She then said, '*I do not voice.*' I said, 'can you talk with your mouth ?' Answer, '*No ;*' 'why ?' '*Because I am very deaf and dumb.*' 'Can you see ?' '*No, because I am blind, I did not talk with fingers when I came with my mother, Doctor did teach me on fork, — what was on fork ?*' I told her paper was fixed on forks ; she then said, '*I did learn to read much with types. Doctor did teach me in nursery. Drusilla was very sick all over.*'

“The words here given (and indeed in all cases) are precisely as she used them ; for great care is taken to note them at the time of utterance. It will be observed that she uses the pronoun, personal and possessive ; and so ready is she to conceive the propriety of it, and the impropriety of her former method, that upon my recently saying, ‘Doctor will teach Laura,’ she eagerly shook my arm to correct me, and told me to say, ‘*I will teach you.*’ She is delighted when she can catch any one in an error like this ; and she shows her sense of the ludicrous, by laughter, and gratifies her innocent self-esteem by displaying her knowledge.

“It will be observed that these words are all spelled correctly ; and indeed her accuracy in this respect is remarkable. She requires to have a word spelled to her only once, or twice at most, and she will seldom fail to spell it right ever afterwards.

“I will give some sentences such as she was accustomed to use about the commencement of the past year, and contrast them with those of later date. Riding in the stage coach with her teacher over a rough road, she said, ‘*Laura will say to man horse will run softly, — horse is wrong.*’ Sitting at breakfast she asked ; ‘*who did make egg ?*’ — Ans. ‘hen ;’ ‘*With foot ?*’ Ans. ‘No ;’ ‘*Laura do love egg, hen will make more.*’

“Here are some of her sentences of a more recent date, and subsequently to her learning the use of pronouns, the numbers of nouns, &c. Being surprised lately that I had not examined her for some time, she stopped short in her lesson, and said to her teacher, ‘*Doctor is not glad that I can cipher good ;*’ being asked why, she said, ‘*because he does not want me to show him sum.*’ She was told I was busy, and had gone to the city ; she said, ‘*horse will be much tired to go to Boston all days.*’

“She easily learned the difference between the singular and plural form, but was inclined for some time to apply the rule of adding *s*, universally. For instance, at her first lesson she had the words *arm-arms*, *hand-hands*, &c. ; then being asked to form the plural of *box*, she said *box s*, &c., and for a long time she would form the plural by the general rule, as *lady*, *lady*s, &c.

“One of the girls had the mumps ; Laura learned the name of the disease ; and soon after she had it herself, but she had the swelling only on one side ; and some one saying, ‘you have got the mumps,’ she replied quickly, ‘*no no, I have mump.*’

“She was a long time in learning words expressive of comparison ; indeed her teacher quite despaired of making her understand the difference between *good*, *better*, and *best*, after

having spent many days in the attempt. By perseverance, however, and by giving her an idea of comparative sizes, she was at last enabled to use comparisons pretty well. She seemed to attach to the word *large*, when connected with an object, a substantive meaning, and to consider it a specific name of the particular thing."

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"The word *or*, insignificant as it seems, has been a stumblingblock to Laura up to this day.

"With pronouns she had very little difficulty. It was thought best at first to talk with her as one does with an infant; and she learned to reply in the same way. *Laura want water, give Laura water*; but she readily learned to substitute the pronoun, and now says *give me water, — I want water, &c.* Indeed she will not allow persons to address her in the third person, but instantly corrects them, being proud to show her knowledge.

"She learned the difference between present and past tense the last year, but made use of the auxiliaries; during this year she has learned the method of inflecting the verb. In this process too, her perfect simplicity rebukes the clumsy irregularities of our language: she learned *jump, jumped, — walk, walked, &c.*, until she had an idea of the mode of forming the imperfect tense, but when she came to the word *see*, she insisted that it should be *seed* in the imperfect; and after this, upon going down to dinner, she asked if it was *eat* — *eated*, but being told it was *ate*, she seemed to try to express the idea that this transposition of letters was not only wrong, but ludicrous, for she laughed heartily."

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"The most recent exercises have been upon those words which require attention to one's own mental operations, such as *remember, forget, expect, hope, &c.*

"Greater difficulties have been experienced in these than in her former lessons, but they have been so far surmounted that she uses many words of this kind, with a correct perception of their meaning.

"The day after her first lesson on the words *I remember*, and *I forget*, this memorandum was made of her second lesson on the same words; Question — 'What do you remember you did do last Sunday?' Answer — '*I remember not to go to meeting,*' meaning that she did not go to meeting. Question; 'What do you remember you did do on Monday?' Answer; '*To walk in streets, on snow;*' this was correct. Question; 'What do you remember you did do in vacation?' Answer; '*What is vacation?*' This was a new word to her; she had



been accustomed to say '*when is no school*,' or '*when girls go home*.' The word being explained, she said '*I remember to go to Halifax*;' meaning that she did go to Halifax, which was true. 'What do you remember you did in vacation before?' Answer; '*to play with Olive, Maria, and Lydia*.' These were the girls who had been her companions.

"Wishing to make her use the word *forget*, I pushed the questions back to periods which she could not recall. I said, 'what did you do when you was a little baby?' She replied laughing, '*I did cry*,' and made the sign of tears running down her cheeks.

" 'What did you say? — [no answer]; did you talk with fingers?' 'No,' [very decidedly]; 'did you talk with mouth? — [a pause] — what did you say with mouth?' — '*I forget*.' I then quickly let her know, that this was the proper word, and of the same force as, *I do not remember*. Thinking this to be a good opportunity of testing her recollection of her infancy, many questions were put to her; but all that could be learned satisfactorily was, that she could recollect lying on her back, and in her mother's arms, and having medicines poured down her throat,— or in her own words, '*I remember mother to give me medicines*,' — making the signs of lying down, and of pouring liquids down the throat.

"It was not until after she had learned a few words of this kind, that it was possible to carry her mind backwards to her infancy; and to the best of my judgment, she has no recollection of any earlier period than the long and painful illness in which she lost her senses. She seems to have no recollection of any words of prattle, which she might have learned in the short respite which she enjoyed from bodily suffering.

"Her idea of oral conversation, it seems to me, is that people make signs with the mouth and lips, as she does with her fingers."

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"When Laura first began to use words, she evidently had no idea of any other use, than to express the individual existence of things, as *book*, *spoon*, &c. The sense of touch had, of course, given her an idea of their existence, and of their individual characteristics; but one would suppose that specific differences would have been suggested to her also; that is, that in feeling of many books, spoons, &c., she would have reflected that some were large, some small, some heavy, some light, and been ready to use words expressive of the specific or generic character. But it would seem not to have been so, and her first use of the words *great*, *small*, *heavy*, &c., was to express merely individual peculiarities; *great book* was to her

the double name of a particular book ; *heavy stone* was one particular stone ; she did not consider these terms as expressive of *substantive* specific differences, or any differences of quality ; the words *great* and *heavy* were not considered abstractly, as the name of a general quality, but they were blended in her mind with the name of the objects in which they existed. At least, such seemed to me to be the case, and it was not until some time after, that the habit of abstraction enabled her to apply words of generic signification in their proper way.

“This view is confirmed by the fact, that when she learned that persons had both individual and family names, she supposed that the same rule must apply to inanimate things, and asked earnestly what was the other name for *chair*, *table*, &c.

“Several of the instances which have been quoted, will show her disposition to form her words by rule, and to admit of no exceptions ; having learned to form the plurals by adding *s*, the imperfect by adding *ed*, &c., she would apply this to every new noun or verb ; consequently the difficulty hitherto has been greater, and her progress slower, than it will be, for she has mastered the most common words, and these seem to be the ones that have been most broken up by the rough colloquial usage of unlettered people.”

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“The moral qualities of her nature have also developed themselves more clearly. She is remarkably correct in her deportment ; and few children of her age evince so much sense of propriety in regard to appearance. Never, by any possibility, is she seen out of her room with her dress disordered ; and if by chance any spot of dirt is pointed out to her on her person, or any little rent in her dress, she discovers a sense of shame, and hastens to remove it.

“She is never discovered in an attitude or an action, at which the most fastidious would revolt, but is remarkable for neatness, order, and propriety.

“There is one fact which is hard to explain in any way ; it is the difference of her deportment to persons of different sex. This was observable when she was only seven years old. She is very affectionate, and when with her friends of her own sex, she is constantly clinging to them, and often kissing and caressing them ; and when she meets with strange ladies, she very soon becomes familiar, examines very freely their dress, and readily allows them to caress her. But with those of the other sex it is entirely different, and she repels every approach to familiarity. She is attached, indeed, to some, and is fond of being with them ; but she will not sit upon their knee, for in-

stance, or allow them to take her round the waist, or submit to those innocent familiarities which it is common to take with children of her age."

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"She seems to have also, a remarkable degree of conscientiousness, for one of her age ; she respects the rights of others, and will insist upon her own.

"She is fond of acquiring property, and seems to have an idea of ownership of things which she has long since laid aside, and no longer uses. She has never been known to take any thing belonging to another ; and never but in one or two instances to tell a falsehood, and then only under strong temptation. Great care, indeed has been taken, not to terrify her by punishment, or to make it so severe, as to tempt her to avoid it by duplicity, as children so often do.

"When she has done wrong, her teacher lets her know that she is grieved, and the tender nature of the child is shown by the ready tears of contrition, and the earnest assurances of amendment, with which she strives to comfort those whom she has pained.

"When she has done any thing wrong, and grieved her teacher, she does not strive to conceal it from her little companions, but communicates it to them, tells them '*it is wrong,*' and says, '*\*——\* cannot love wrong girl.*'

"When she has any thing nice given to her, she is particularly desirous that those who happen to be ill, or afflicted in any way, should share with her, although they may not be those whom she particularly loves in other circumstances ; nay, even if it be one whom she dislikes. She loves to be employed in attending the sick, and is most assiduous in her simple attentions, and tender and endearing in her demeanor.

"It has been remarked in former reports, that she can distinguish different degrees of intellect in others, and that she soon regarded almost with contempt, a new comer, when, after a few days, she discovered her weakness of mind. This unamiable part of her character has been more strongly developed during the past year.

"She chooses for her friends and companions, those children who are intelligent, and can talk best with her ; and she evidently dislikes to be with those who are deficient in intellect, unless, indeed, she can make them serve her purposes, which she is evidently inclined to do. She takes advantage of them, and makes them wait upon her, in a manner that she knows she could not exact of others ; and in various ways she shows her Saxon blood.

She is fond of having other children noticed and caressed by

the teachers, and those whom she respects ; but this must not be carried too far, or she becomes jealous. She wants to have her share, which, if not the lion's, is the greater part ; and if she does not get it, she says, '*My mother will love me.*'

" Her tendency to imitation is so strong, that it leads her to actions which must be entirely incomprehensible to her, and which can give her no other pleasure than the gratification of an internal faculty. She has been known to sit for half an hour, holding a book before her sightless eyes, and moving her lips, as she has observed seeing people do when reading.

" She one day pretended that her doll was sick, and went through all the motions of tending it, and giving it medicine ; she then put it carefully to bed, and placed a bottle of hot water to its feet, laughing all the time most heartily. When I came home, she insisted upon my going to see it, and feel its pulse ; and when I told her to put a blister to its back, she seemed to enjoy it amazingly, and almost screamed with delight.

" Her social feelings, and her affections, are very strong ; and when she is sitting at work, or at her studies, by the side of one of her little friends, she will break off from her task every few moments, to hug and kiss them with an earnestness and warmth, that is touching to behold.

" When left alone, she occupies and apparently amuses herself, and seems quite contented ; and so strong seems to be the natural tendency of thought to put on the garb of language, that she often soliloquizes in the *finger language*, slow and tedious as it is. But it is only when alone, that she is quiet ; for if she becomes sensible of the presence of any one near her, she is restless until she can sit close beside them, hold their hand, and converse with them by signs.

" She does not cry from vexation and disappointment, like other children, but only from grief. If she receives a blow by accident, or hurts herself, she laughs and jumps about, as if trying to drown the pain by muscular action. If the pain is severe, she does not go to her teachers or companions for sympathy, but on the contrary tries to get away by herself, and then seems to give vent to a feeling of spite, by throwing herself about violently, and roughly handling whatever she gets hold of.

" Twice only have tears been drawn from her by the severity of pain, and then she ran away, as if ashamed of crying for an accidental injury. But the fountain of her tears is by no means dried up, as is seen when her companions are in pain, or her teacher is grieved.

" In her intellectual character, it is pleasing to observe an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and a quick perception of the

relations of things. In her moral character, it is beautiful to behold her continual gladness, her keen enjoyment of existence, her expansive love, her unhesitating confidence, her sympathy with suffering, her conscientiousness, truthfulness, and hopefulness.

“No religious feeling, properly so called, has developed itself; nor is it yet time, perhaps, to look for it. But she has shown a disposition to respect those who have power and knowledge, and to love those who have goodness; and when her perceptive faculties shall have taken cognizance of the operations of nature, and she shall be accustomed to trace effects to their causes, then may her veneration be turned to Him who is almighty, her respect to Him who is omniscient, and her love to Him who is all goodness and love!

“Until then, I shall not deem it wise, by premature effort, to incur the risk of giving her ideas of God, which would be alike unworthy of His character, and fatal to her peace.

“I should fear that she might personify him in a way too common with children, who clothe him with unworthy, and sometimes grotesque attributes, which their subsequently developed reason condemns, but strives in vain to correct.”— pp. 32–40.

We have restricted ourselves to an exhibition of the main facts of this unprecedented case, as they are recorded by Dr. Howe in the recent Report. He has connected with them many important observations, for which we would also find room, were it not that they may be laid before our readers to still better advantage, when some of them shall have been further pursued. We wait the result of his continued efforts with profound interest. It is with difficulty that we abstain from the attempt to express, — faintly, after all, it would have to be, — our sense of the worth of his labors; but to those who have the true heart for such, the praise of men is apt to be felt as scarcely better than intrusion and annoyance. This is a wide and busy world, and in it a great many great things are done and talked about; but it has exceedingly few things for the ambition or enjoyment of a wise man, to be compared with the consciousness of services like these in the cause of afflicted humanity.

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